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*G R E A T B R I T A I N*  
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H E R C O L O N I E S,  
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S H O R T R E P R E S E N T A T I O N  
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C A L A M I T O U S S T A T E o f t h e  
E N S L A V E D N E G R O E S  
I N T H E  
B R I T I S H D O M I N I O N S.

A N E W E D I T I O N.

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BY ANTHONY BENEZET.

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## A

## C A U T I O N, &amp;c.

*British  
Dominions*

**A**T a time when the general rights and liberties of mankind, and the preservation of those valuable privileges transmitted to us from our ancestors, are become so much the subjects of universal consideration; can it be an inquiry indifferent to any, how many of those who distinguish themselves as the Advocates of Liberty, remain insensible and inattentive to the treatment of thousands and tens of thousands of our fellow-men, who, from motives of avarice, and the inexorable decree of tyrant custom, are at this very time kept in the most deplorable state of Slavery, in many parts of the *British Dominions*?

The intent of publishing the following sheets, is more fully to make known the aggravated iniquity attending the practice of the Slave-trade; whereby many thousands of our fellow-creatures, as free as ourselves by nature, and equally with us the subjects of

Christ's redeeming Grace, are yearly brought into inextricable and barbarous bondage; and many, very many, to miserable and untimely ends.

The Truth of this lamentable Complaint is so obvious to persons of candour, under whose notice it hath fallen, that several have lately published their sentiments thereon, as a matter which calls for the most serious consideration of all who are concerned for the civil or religious welfare of their Country. How an evil of so deep a dye, hath so long, not only passed uninterrupted by those in Power, but hath even had their Countenance, is indeed surprising; and charity would suppose, must in a great measure have arisen from this, that many persons in government, both of the Clergy and Laity, in whose power it hath been to put a stop to the Trade, have been unacquainted with the corrupt motives which give life to it, and with the groans, the dying groans, which daily ascend to God, the common Father of mankind, from the broken hearts of those his deeply oppressed creatures: otherwise the powers of the earth would not, I think I may venture to say could not, have so long authorized a practice so inconsistent with every idea of liberty and justice, which, as the learned *James Foster* says, *Bids that God, which is the God and Father of the Gentiles, unconverted to Christianity, most daring and*

*and bold defiance; and spurns at all the principles both of natural and revealed Religion.*

Much might justly be said of the temporal evils which attend this practice, as it is destructive of the welfare of human society, and of the peace and prosperity of every country, in proportion as it prevails. It might be also shewn, that it destroys the bonds of natural affection and interest, whereby mankind in general are united; that it introduces idleness, discourages marriage, corrupts the youth, ruins and debauches morals, excites continual apprehensions of dangers, and frequent alarms, to which the Whites are necessarily exposed from so great an increase of a People, that, by their Bondage and Oppressions, become natural enemies, yet, at the same time, are filling the places and eating the bread of those who would be the Support and Security of the Country. But as these and many more reflections of the same kind may occur to a considerate mind, I shall only endeavour to shew, from the nature of the Trade, the plenty which *Guinea* affords to its inhabitants, the barbarous Treatment of the Negroes, and the Observations made thereon by Authors of note, that it is inconsistent with the plainest Precepts of the Gospel, the dictates of reason, and every common sentiment of humanity,

In an Account of the *European Settlements in America*, printed in *London*, 1757, the Author, speaking on this Subject, says: ‘ The Negroes in our Colonies endure a Slavery more complete, and attended with far worse circumstances than what any people in their condition suffer in any other part of the world, or have suffered in any other period of time: Proofs of this are not wanting. The prodigious waste which we experience in this unhappy part of our Species, is a full and melancholy Evidence of this Truth. The Island of *Barbadoes* (the Negroes upon which do not amount to eighty thousand) notwithstanding all the means which they use to encrease them by Propagation, and that the Climate is in every respect (except that of being more wholsome) exactly resembling the Climate from whence they come; notwithstanding all this, *Barbadoes* lies under a necessity of an annual recruit of five thousand slaves, to keep up the stock at the number I have mentioned. This prodigious failure, which is at least in the same proportion in all our Islands, shews demonstratively that some uncommon and unsupportable Hardship lies upon the Negroes, which wears them down in such a surprising manner; and this, I imagine, is principally the excessive labour which they undergo.’ In an Account of part of *North-America*, published by *Thomas Jeffery*, 1761, speaking

of the usage the Negroes receive in the *West-India Islands*, he thus expresses himself: ‘ It is impossible for a human heart to reflect upon the servitude of these dregs of mankind, without in some measure feeling for their misery, which ends but with their lives. — Nothing can be more wretched than the condition of this People. One would imagine, they were framed to be the disgrace of the human species: banished from their Country, and deprived of that blessing, Liberty, on which all other nations set the greatest value, they are in a manner reduced to the condition of beasts of burden. In general a few roots, potatoes especially, are their food; and two rags, which neither screen them from the heat of the day, nor the extraordinary coolness of the night, all their covering; their sleep very short; their labour almost continual; they receive no wages; but have twenty lashes for the smallest fault.’

A considerate young person, who was lately in one of our *West-India Islands*, where he observed the miserable situation of the Negroes, makes the following remarks: ‘ I meet with daily exercise, to see the treatment which these miserable wretches meet with from their masters, with but few exceptions. They whip them most unmercifully, on small occasions; they beat them with thick

Clubs, and you will see their Bodies all  
 whaled and scarred: in short, they seem to  
 set no other value on their lives than as they  
 cost them so much money; and are not  
 restrained from killing them, when angry,  
 by a worthier consideration than that they  
 lose so much. They act as though they did  
 not look upon them as a race of human  
 creatures, who have reason, and remem-  
 brance of misfortunes; but as beasts, like  
 oxen, who are stubborn, hardy, and sense-  
 less, fit for burdens, and designed to bear  
 them. They will not allow them to have  
 any claim to human privileges, or scarce,  
 indeed, to be regarded as the work of God.  
 Though it was consistent with the justice of  
 our Maker to pronounce the sentence on  
 our common parent, and through him on  
 all succeeding generations, *That he and they*  
*should eat their bread by the sweat of their*  
*brow*; yet does it not stand recorded by the  
 same Eternal Truth, *That the Labourer is*  
*worthy of his Hire?* It cannot be allowed in  
 natural justice, that there should be a servi-  
 tude without condition: A cruel endless  
 servitude. It cannot be reconcileable to  
 natural justice, that whole nations, nay,  
 whole continents of men, should be de-  
 voted to do the drudgery of life for others,  
 be dragged away from their attachments of  
 relations and societies, and made to serve  
 the appetites and pleasures of a race of men,  
 whose

‘ whose superiority has been obtained by an illegal force.’

A particular account of the treatment these unhappy *Africans* receive in the *West-Indies* was lately published, which, even by those who, blinded by interest, seek excuses for the Trade, and endeavour to palliate the cruelty exercised upon them, is allowed to be a true, though rather too favourable representation of the usage they receive, which is as follows, *viz.* ‘ The iniquity of the Slave-trade is greatly aggravated by the inhumanity with which the Negroes are treated in the Plantations, as well with respect to food and clothing, as from the unreasonable labour which is commonly exacted from them. To which may be added the cruel chastisements they frequently suffer, without any other bounds than the will and wrath of their hard task-masters. In *Barbadoes*, and some other of the Islands, six pints of *Indian* corn and three herrings are reckoned a full weeks allowance for a working slave, and in the System of Geography it is said, *That in Jamaica the owners of the Negroe-slaves set aside for each a parcel of ground, and allow them Sundays to manure it, the produce of which, with sometimes a few herrings, or other salt-fish, is all that is allowed for their support.* Their allowance for clothing in the Islands is seldom more than six yards of *osenbrigs*

osenbrigs each year: And in the more northern Colonies, where the piercing westerly winds are long and sensibly felt, these poor *Africans* suffer much for want of sufficient clothing, indeed some have none till they are able to pay for it by their labour. The time that the Negroes work in the *West-Indies*, is from day-break till noon; then again from two o'clock till dusk: (during which time they are attended by overseers, who severely scourge those who appear to them dilatory) and before they are suffered to go to their quarters, they have still something to do, as collecting of herbage for the horses, gathering fuel for the boilers, &c. so that it is often half past twelve before they can get home, when they have scarce time to grind and boil their *Indian* corn; whereby it often happens that they are called again to labour before they can satisfy their hunger. And here no delay or excuse will avail, for if they are not in the Field immediately upon the usual notice, they must expect to feel the Overseer's Lash. In crop-time (which lasts many months) they are obliged (by turns) to work most of the night in the boiling-house. Thus their Owners, from a desire of making the greatest gain by the labour of their slaves, lay heavy Burdens on them, and yet feed and clothe them very sparingly, and some scarce feed or clothe them at all, so that the poor

creatures are obliged to shift for their living  
in the best manner they can, which occasions  
their being often killed in the neighbouring  
lands, stealing potatoes, or other food, to  
satisfy their hunger. And if they take any  
thing from the plantation they belong to,  
though under such pressing want, their  
owners will correct them severely, for taking  
a little of what they have so hardly laboured  
for, whilst they themselves riot in the great-  
est luxury and excess.—It is a matter of  
astonishment, how a people, who, as a na-  
tion, are looked upon as generous and hu-  
mane, and so much value themselves for their  
uncommon sense of the Benefit of Liberty,  
can live in the practice of such extreme op-  
pression and inhumanity, without seeing the  
inconsistency of such conduct, and without  
feeling great Remorse: nor is it less amazing  
to hear these men calmly making calcula-  
tions about the strength and lives of their  
fellow-men; in *Jamaica*, if six in ten, of the  
new imported Negroes survive the seasoning,  
it is looked upon as a gaining purchase: And  
in most of the other plantations, if the  
Negroes live eight or nine years, their labour  
is reckoned a sufficient compensation for  
their cost.—If calculations of this sort  
were made upon the strength and labour of  
beasts of burden, it would not appear so  
strange; but even then a merciful man would  
certainly use his beast with more mercy than

‘ is usually shewn to the poor Negroes.—Will  
 ‘ not the groans of this deeply afflicted and  
 ‘ oppressed people reach Heaven, and when  
 ‘ the cup of iniquity is full, must not the  
 ‘ inevitable consequence be pouring forth of  
 ‘ the judgments of God upon their oppressors.  
 ‘ But, alas! is it not too manifest that this  
 ‘ oppression has already long been the object  
 ‘ of the divine displeasure; for what heavier  
 ‘ judgment, what greater calamity can befall  
 ‘ any people, than to become a prey to that  
 ‘ hardness of heart, that forgetfulness of God,  
 ‘ and insensibility to every religious impres-  
 ‘ sion; as well as that general depravation of  
 ‘ manners, which so much prevails in the  
 ‘ Colonies, in proportion as they have more or  
 ‘ less enriched themselves, at the expence of  
 ‘ the blood and bondage of the Negroes.’

The situation of the Negroes in our South-  
 ern provinces on the Continent, is also feel-  
 ingly set forth by *George Whitfield*, in a  
 Letter from *Georgia*, to the Inhabitants of  
*Maryland, Virginia, North and South-Carolina*,  
 printed in the Year 1739, of which the fol-  
 lowing is an extract: ‘ As I lately passed  
 ‘ through your provinces, in my way hither,  
 ‘ I was sensibly touched with a fellow-feeling  
 ‘ of the miseries of the poor Negroes. Whe-  
 ‘ ther it be lawful for *Christians* to buy slaves,  
 ‘ and thereby encourage the Nations from  
 ‘ whom they are bought, to be at perpetual

‘ war with each other, I shall not take upon  
‘ me to determine; sure I am, it is sinful,  
‘ when bought, to use them as bad, nay worse  
‘ than as though they were brutes; and what-  
‘ ever particular exception there may be, (as  
‘ I would charitably hope there are some) I  
‘ fear the generality of you, that own Negroes,  
‘ are liable to such a charge; for your slaves,  
‘ I believe, work as hard, if not harder, than  
‘ the horses whereon you ride. These, after  
‘ they have done their work, are fed and  
‘ taken proper care of; but many Negroes,  
‘ when wearied with labour, in your planta-  
‘ tions, have been obliged to grind their own  
‘ corn, after they return home. Your dogs  
‘ are caressed and fondled at your table; but  
‘ your slaves, who are frequently stiled dogs  
‘ or beasts, have not an equal privilege; they  
‘ are scarce permitted to pick up the crumbs  
‘ which fall from their master’s table.—Not  
‘ to mention what numbers have been given  
‘ up to the inhuman usage of cruel task-  
‘ masters, who, by their unrelenting scourges,  
‘ have ploughed their backs, and made long  
‘ furrows, and at length brought them even  
‘ to death. When passing along, I have view-  
‘ ed your plantations cleared and cultivated,  
‘ many spacious houses built, and the owners  
‘ of them faring sumptuously every day, my  
‘ blood has frequently almost run cold within  
‘ me, to consider how many of your slaves had  
‘ neither convenient food to eat, or proper  
‘ raiment

raiment to put on, notwithstanding most of  
 the comforts you enjoy were solely owing to  
 their indefatigable labours.—The Scripture  
 says, *Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that  
 treadeth out the corn.* Does God take care  
 for oxen? and will he not take care of the  
 Negroes also? undoubtedly he will.—Go to  
 now ye rich men, weep and howl for your  
 miseries that shall come upon you: Behold  
 the provision of the poor Negroes, who have  
 reaped down your fields, which is by you  
 denied them, crieth; and the cries of them  
 which reaped, are entered into the ears of  
 the Lord of Sabbath. We have a remark-  
 able instance of God's taking cognizance of,  
 and avenging the quarrel of poor slaves,  
 2 Sam. xxi. 1. *There was a famine in the*  
*days of David three years, year after year;*  
*and David enquired of the Lord: And the*  
*Lord answered, It is for Saul, and for his*  
*bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites.*  
 Two things are here very remarkable: First,  
 These *Gibeonites* were only hewers of wood  
 and drawers of water, or in other words,  
 slaves like yours. Secondly, That this plague  
 was sent by God many years after the injury,  
 the cause of the plague, was committed.  
 And for what end were this and such like  
 examples recorded in holy Scriptures? with-  
 out doubt, for our learning.—For God is  
 the same to-day as he was yesterday, and  
 will continue the same for ever. He does  
 not

‘ not reject the prayer of the poor and destitute; nor disregard the cry of the meanest Negro. The blood of them spilt for these many years in your respective provinces will ascend up to heaven against you.’

Some who have only seen Negroes in an abject state of slavery, broken-spirited and dejected, knowing nothing of their situation in their native country, may apprehend, that they are naturally insensible of the benefits of Liberty, being destitute and miserable in every respect, and that our suffering them to live amongst us (as the *Gibeonites* of old were permitted to live with the *Israelites*) though even on more oppressive terms, is to them a favour; but these are certainly erroneous opinions, with respect to far the greatest part of them: Although it is highly probable that in a country which is more than three thousand miles in extent from north to south, and as much from east to west, there will be barren parts, and many inhabitants more uncivilized and barbarous than others; as is the case in all other countries: yet, from the most authentic accounts, the inhabitants of *Guinea* appear, generally speaking, to be an industrious, humane, sociable people, whose capacities are naturally as enlarged, and as open to improvement, as those of the *Europeans*; and that their Country is fruitful, and in many places well improved, abounding in cattle, grain and fruits.

fruits. And as the earth yields all the year round a fresh supply of food, and but little clothing is requisite, by reason of the continual warmth of the climate; the necessaries of life are much easier procured in most parts of *Africa*, than in our more northern climes. This is confirmed by many authors of note, who have resided there; among others, *M. Adanson*, in his account of *Goree* and *Senegal*, in the year 1754, says, ‘ Which way foever I turned my eyes on this pleasant spot, I beheld a perfect image of pure nature; an agreeable solitude, bounded on every side by charming landscapes, the rural situation of cottages in the midst of trees; the ease and indolence of the Negroes reclined under the shade of their spreading foliage; the simplicity of their dress and manners; the whole revived in my mind the idea of our first parents, and I seemed to contemplate the world in its primitive state: They are, generally speaking, very good-natured, sociable and obliging. I was not a little pleased with this my first reception; it convinced me, that there ought to be a considerable abatement made in the accounts I had read and heard every where of the savage character of the *Africans*. I observed, both in Negroes and Moors, great humanity and sociableness, which gave me strong hopes, that I should be very safe amongst them, and meet with the

‘ the success I desired, in my enquiries after  
‘ the curiosities of the country.’

*William Bosman*, a principal Factor for the Dutch, who resided sixteen years in *Guinea*, speaking of the natives of that part where he then was, says, ‘ They are generally a good sort of people, honest in their dealings;’ others he describes as ‘ being generally friendly to strangers, of a mild conversation, affable, and easy to be overcome with reason.’ He adds, ‘ That some Negroes, who have had an agreeable education, have manifested a brightness of understanding equal to any of us.’ Speaking of the fruitfulness of the country, he says, ‘ It was very populous, plentifully provided with corn, potatoes and fruit, which grew close to each other; in some places a foot-path is the only ground that is not covered with them; the Negroes leaving no place, which is thought fertile, uncultivated; and immediately after they have reaped, they are sure to sow again.’ Other parts he describes, as ‘ being full of towns and villages; the soil very rich, and so well cultivated, as to look like an entire garden, abounding in rice, corn, oxen, and poultry, and the inhabitants laborious.’

*William Smith*, who was sent by the African Company to visit their settlements on the coast of *Guinea*, in the year 1726, gives much

the same account of the country of *Delmina* and *Cape Corfe*, &c. for beauty and goodness, and adds, ‘ The more you come downward towards that part, called *Slave-Coast*, the more delightful and rich the soil appears.’ Speaking of their disposition, he says, ‘ They were a civil, good-natured people, industrious to the last degree. It is easy to perceive what happy memories they are blessed with, and how great progress they would make in the sciences, in case their genius was cultivated with study.’ He adds, from the information he received of one of the Factors, who had resided ten years in that country, ‘ That the discerning natives account it their greatest unhappiness, that they were ever visited by the *Europeans*.—That the Christians introduced the traffick of Slaves; and that before our coming they lived in peace.’

*Andrew Brue*, a principal man in the *French* Factory, in the account he gives of the great river *Senegal*, which runs many hundred miles up the country, tells his readers, ‘ The farther you go from the Sea, the country on the river seems more fruitful and well improved. It abounds in *Guinea* and *Indian* corn, rice, pulse, tobacco, and indigo. Here are vast meadows, which feed large herds of great and small cattle; poultry are numerous, as well as wild fowl.’ The same Author, in his travels to the south of the river *Gambia*, expresses

expresses his surprize, ‘ to see the land so well cultivated; scarce a spot lay unimproved; the low grounds, divided by small canals, were all sowed with rice; the higher ground planted with *Indian* corn, millet, and peas of different sorts: beef and mutton very cheap, as well as all other necessaries of life.’

The account this Author gives of the disposition of the natives, is, ‘ That they are generally good-natured and civil, and may be brought to any thing by fair and soft means.’ *Artus*, speaking of the same people, says, ‘ They are a sincere, inoffensive people, and do no injustice either to one another, or strangers.’

From these Accounts, both of the good Disposition of the Natives, and the Fruitfulness of most parts of *Guinea*, which are confirmed by many other Authors, it may well be concluded, that their acquaintance with the *Europeans* would have been a happiness to them, had those last not only borne the name, but indeed been influenced by the Spirit of *Christianity*; but, alas! how hath the Conduct of the Whites contradicted the Precepts and Example of Christ? Instead of promoting the End of his Coming, by preaching the Gospel of Peace and Good-will to Man, they have, by their practices, contributed to enflame every noxious passion of corrupt nature in the Negroes; they have

incited them to make war one upon another, and for this purpose have furnished them with prodigious quantities of ammunition and arms, whereby they have been hurried into confusion, bloodshed, and all the extremities of temporal misery, which must necessarily beget in their minds such a general detestation and scorn of the *Christian* name, as may deeply affect, if not wholly preclude, their belief of the great Truths of our holy Religion. Thus an insatiable desire of gain hath become the principal and moving cause of the most abominable and dreadful scene, that was perhaps ever acted upon the face of the earth; even the power of their Kings hath been made subservient to answer this wicked purpose; instead of being Protectors of their people, these Rulers, allured by the tempting bait laid before them by the *European* Factors, &c. have invaded the Liberties of their unhappy subjects, and are become their Oppressors.

Divers accounts have already appeared in print, declarative of the shocking wickedness with which this Trade is carried on; these may not have fallen into the hands of some of my readers, I shall, therefore, for their information, select a few of the most remarkable instances that I have met with, shewing the method by which the Trade is commonly managed all along the *African* coast.

*Francis*

*Francis Moor*, Factor to the *African Company*, on the river *Gambia*, relates, ‘ That when the King of *Barsalli* wants goods, &c. he sends a messenger to the *English Governor* at *James's Fort*, to desire he would send up a sloop with a cargo of goods; which (says the author) the Governor never fails to do: Against the time the vessel arrives, the King plunders some of his enemies towns, selling the people for such goods as he wants.— If he is not at war with any neighbouring King, he falls upon one of his own towns, and makes bold to sell his own miserable subjects.’

*N. Brue*, in his account of the Trade, &c. writes, ‘ That having received a quantity of goods, he wrote to the King of the country, That if he had a sufficient number of slaves, he was ready to trade with him. This Prince (says that author) as well as other Negroe Monarchs, has always a sure way of supplying his deficiencies by selling his own subjects.—The King had recourse to this method, by seizing three hundred of his own people, and sent word (to *Brue*,) that he had the slaves ready to deliver for the goods.’

The Misery and Bloodshed, consequent to the Slave-trade, is amply set forth by the following extracts of two voyages to the coast

of Guinea for slaves. The first in a vessel from Liverpool, taken *verbatim* from the original manuscript of the Surgeon's journal, *viz.*

‘ SESTRO, December the 29th, 1724. No trade to-day, though many Traders come on board; they inform us, that the people are gone to war within land, and will bring prisoners enough in two or three days: in hopes of which we stay.

‘ The 30th. No trade yet, but our Traders came on board to-day, and informed us, the people had burnt four towns of their enemies, so that to-morrow we expect slaves off. Another large ship is come in: Yesterday came in a large *Londoner*.

‘ The 31st. Fair weather, but no trade yet: We see each night towns burning; but we hear the *Sestro* men are many of them killed by the inland Negroes, so that we fear this war will be unsuccessful.

‘ The 2d January. Last night we saw a prodigious fire break out about eleven o'clock, and this morning see the town of *Sestro* burnt down to the ground, (it contained some hundreds of houses) so that we find their enemies are too hard for them at present, and consequently our trade spoiled here; so that about seven o'clock we

weighed anchor, as did likewise the three other vessels, to proceed lower down.'

The second relation, also taken from the original manuscript journal of a person of credit, who went Surgeon on the same account in a vessel from *New-York* to the coast of *Guinea*, about nineteen years past, is as follows, *viz.*

' Being on the coast at a place called *Bafalia*, the Commander of the vessel, according to custom, sent a person on shore with a present to the King, acquainting him with his arrival, and letting him know, they wanted a cargo of slaves. The King promised to furnish them with slaves; and in order to do it, set out to go to war against his enemies, designing also to surprize some town, and take all the people prisoners: Some time after, the King sent them word, he had not yet met with the desired success, having been twice repulsed, in attempting to break up two towns; but that he still hoped to procure a number of slaves for them; and in this design he persisted till he met his enemies in the field, where a battle was fought, which lasted three days; during which time the engagement was so bloody, that four thousand five hundred men were slain on the spot.' The person, that wrote the account, beheld the bodies as

they lay on the field of battle. ‘ Think (says he in his journal) what a pitiable sight it was, to see the widows weeping over their lost husbands, orphans deplored the loss of their fathers, &c. &c.’

Those who are acquainted with the Trade agree, that many Negroes on the sea-coast, who have been corrupted by their intercourse and converse with the *European* Factors, have learnt to stick at no act of cruelty for gain. These make it a practice to steal abundance of little Blacks of both sexes, when found on the roads or in the fields, where their parents keep them all day to watch the corn, &c. Some authors say, the Negroe Factors go six or seven hundred miles up the country with goods, bought from the *Europeans*, where markets of men are kept in the same manner as those of beasts with us. When the poor slaves, whether brought from far or near, come to the sea-shore, they are stripped naked, and strictly examined by the *European* Surgeons, both men and women, without the least distinction or modesty; those which are approved as good, are marked with a red-hot iron with the ship’s mark; after which they are put on board the vessels, the men being shackled with irons two and two together. Reader, bring the matter home, and consider whether any situation in life can be more completely miserable than that of those

those distressed captives. When we reflect, that each individual of this number had some tender attachment which was broken by this cruel separation; some parent or wife, who had not an opportunity of mingling tears in a parting embrace; perhaps some infant or aged parent whom his labour was to feed and vigilance protect; themselves under the dreadful apprehension of an unknown perpetual slavery; pent up within the narrow confines of a vessel, sometimes six or seven hundred together, where they lie as close as possible. Under these complicated distresses they are often reduced to a state of desperation, wherein many have leaped into the sea, and have kept themselves under water till they were drowned; others have starved themselves to death, for the prevention whereof some masters of vessels have cut off the legs and arms of a number of those poor desperate creatures, to terrify the rest. Great numbers have also frequently been killed, and some deliberately put to death under the greatest torture, when they have attempted to rise, in order to free themselves from their present misery, and the slavery designed them. An instance of the last kind appears particularly in an account given by the master of a vessel, who brought a cargo of slaves to *Barbadoes*; indeed it appears so irreconcileable to the common dictates of humanity, that one would doubt the truth of

of it, had it not been related by a serious person of undoubted credit, who had it from the captain's own mouth. Upon an enquiry, What had been the success of his voyage? he answered, ' That he had found it a difficult matter to set the negroes a fighting with each other, in order to procure the number he wanted; but that when he had obtained this end, and had got his vessel filled with slaves, a new difficulty arose from their refusal to take food; those desperate creatures chusing rather to die with hunger, than to be carried from their native country.' Upon a farther inquiry, by what means he had prevailed upon them to forego this desperate resolution? he answered, ' That he obliged all the negroes to come upon deck, where they persisted in their resolution of not taking food, he caused his sailors to lay hold upon one of the most obstinate, and chopt the poor creature into small pieces, forcing some of the others to eat a part of the mangled body; withal swearing to the survivors that he would use them all, one after the other, in the same manner, if they did not consent to eat.' This horrid execution he applauded as a good act, it having had the desired effect, in bringing them to take food.

A similiar case is mentioned in *Astley's Collection of Voyages*, by *John Atkins, Surgeon*

geon on board Admiral *Ogle's* squadron, ‘ Of  
 ‘ one *Harding*, master of a vessel, in which  
 ‘ several of the men-slaves, and a woman-  
 ‘ slave, had attempted to rise, in order to  
 ‘ recover their liberty: some of whom the  
 ‘ master, of his own authority, sentenced to  
 ‘ cruel death; making them first eat the  
 ‘ heart and liver of one of those he killed.  
 ‘ The woman he hoisted by the thumbs;  
 ‘ whipped and slashed with knives before the  
 ‘ other slaves, till she died.’

As detestable and shocking as this may appear to such, whose hearts are not yet hardened by the practice of that cruelty, which the love of wealth, by degrees, introduceth into the human mind; it will not be strange to those who have been concerned or employed in the Trade. Now here arises a necessary query to those who hold the balance and sword of justice; and who must account to God for the use they have made of it. *Since our English law is so truly valuable for its justice, how can they overlook these barbarous deaths of the unhappy Africans without trial, or due proof of their being guilty, of crimes adequate to their punishment? Why are those masters of vessels, (who are often not the most tender and considerate of men) thus suffered to be the sovereign arbiters of the lives of the miserable Negroes; and allowed, with impunity, thus to destroy, may I not say, murder their*

*their fellow-creatures, and that by means so cruel, as cannot be even related but with shame and horror?*

When the vessels arrive at their destined port in the Colonies, the poor Negroes are to be disposed of to the planters; and here they are again exposed naked, without any distinction of sexes, to the brutal examination of their purchasers; and this, it may well be judged, is to many of them another occasion of deep distress, especially to the females. Add to this, that near connections must now again be separated, to go with their several purchasers: In this melancholy scene Mothers are seen hanging over their Daughters, bedewing their naked breasts with tears, and Daughters clinging to their Parents; not knowing what new stage of distress must follow their separation, or if ever they shall meet again: And here what sympathy, what commiseration are they to expect? why indeed, if they will not separate as readily as their owners think proper, the whipper is called for, and the lash exercised upon their naked bodies, till obliged to part.

Can any human heart, that retains a fellow-feeling for the Sufferings of mankind, be unconcerned at relations of such grievous affliction, to which this oppressed part of our Species are subjected: God gave to man dominion

dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowls of the air, and over the cattle, &c. but imposed no involuntary subjection of one man to another.

The Truth of this Position has of late been clearly set forth by persons of reputation and ability, particularly *George Wallis*, in his System of the Laws of *Scotland*, whose sentiments are so worthy the notice of all considerate persons, that I shall here repeat a part of what he has not long since published, concerning the *African Trade*, *viz.* ‘ If this ‘ Trade admits of a moral or a rational justi- ‘ fication, every crime, even the most atro- ‘ cious, may be justified: Government was ‘ instituted for the good of mankind. Kings, ‘ Princes, Governors, are not proprietors of ‘ those who are subjected to their authority, ‘ they have not a right to make them miser- ‘ able. On the contrary, their authority is ‘ vested in them, that they may, by the just ‘ exercise of it, promote the Happiness of ‘ their people: Of course, they have not a ‘ right to dispose of their Liberty, and to sell ‘ them for slaves: Besides, no man has a ‘ right to acquire or to purchase them; men ‘ and their Liberty, are not either saleable or ‘ purchaseable: One therefore has no body ‘ but himself to blame, in case he shall ‘ find himself deprived of a man, whom he ‘ thought he had, by buying for a price, ‘ made

made his own; for he dealt in a Trade which was illicit, and was prohibited by the most obvious dictates of humanity. For these reasons, every one of those unfortunate men, who are pretended to be slaves, has a right to be declared free, for he never lost his Liberty, he could not lose it; his Prince had no power to dispose of him: of course the sale was void. This right he carries about with him, and is entitled every where to get it declared. As soon, therefore, as he comes into a country, in which the Judges are not forgetful of their own humanity, it is their duty to remember that he is a man, and to declare him to be free.—This is the Law of Nature, which is obligatory on all men, at all times, and in all places.—Would not any of us, who should be snatched by Pirates from his native land, think himself cruelly abused, and at all times intitled to be free? Have not these unfortunate *Africans*, who meet with the same cruel fate, the same right? are not they men as well as we? and have they not the same sensibility? Let us not, therefore, defend or support an usage, which is contrary to all the Laws of Humanity.'

*Francis Hutchinson*, also in his System of Moral Philosophy, speaking on the subject of Slavery, says, ‘ He who detains another by force in slavery, is always bound to prove his

his title. The Slave sold, or carried away into a distant country, must not be obliged to prove a negative, that he never forfeited his Liberty. The violent possessor must, in all cases, shew his title, especially where the old proprietor is well known. In this case each man is the original proprietor of his own Liberty: The proof of his losing it must be incumbent on those, who deprived him of it by force. Strange, (says the same author) that in any nation, where a sense of Liberty prevails, where the *Christian* religion is professed, custom and high prospect of gain can so stupify the consciences of men, and all sense of natural justice, that they can hear such computation made about the value of their fellow-men and their Liberty, without abhorrence and indignation.'

The noted Baron *Montesquieu* gives it, as his opinion, in his *Spirit of Laws*, page 348, 'That nothing more assimilates a man to a beast than living amongst freemen, himself a slave; such people as these are the natural enemies of society, and their number must always be dangerous.'

The Author of a pamphlet, lately printed in *London*, entitled, *An Essay in Vindication of the continental Colonies of America*, writes, 'That the bondage we have imposed on the *Africans*, is absolutely repugnant to justice.

' That

That it is highly inconsistent with civil  
 policy: First, as it tends to suppress all  
 improvements in arts and sciences; without  
 which it is morally impossible that any  
 nation should be happy or powerful. Se-  
 condly, as it may deprave the minds of the  
 freemen; steeling their hearts against the  
 laudable feelings of virtue and humanity.  
 And, lastly, as it endangers the community  
 by the destructive effects of civil commo-  
 tions: need I add to these (says that author)  
 what every heart, which is not callous to  
 all tender feelings, will readily suggest; that  
 it is shocking to humanity, violative of every  
 generous sentiment, abhorrent utterly from  
 the *Christian Religion*; for, as *Montesquieu*  
 very justly observes, *We must suppose them*  
*not to be men, or a suspicion would follow*  
*that we ourselves are not Christians.* —  
 There cannot be a more dangerous maxim,  
 than that necessity is a plea for injustice.  
 For who shall fix the degree of this necef-  
 sity? What villain so atrocious, who may  
 not urge this excuse? or, as *Milton* has  
 happily expressed it,

—————— *And with necessity,*  
*The tyrant's plea, excuse his dev'lisch deed,*

That our Colonies want people, is a very  
 weak argument for so inhuman a violation  
 of justice.— Shall a civilized, a *Christian*  
 nation encourage Slavery, because the bar-  
 barous

‘ barous, savage, lawless *African* hath done it? Monstrous thought! To what end do we profess a religion whose dictates we so flagrantly violate? Wherefore have we that pattern of goodness and humanity, if we refuse to follow it? How long shall we continue a practice, which policy rejects, justice condemns, and piety dissuades? Shall the *Americans* persist in a conduct, which cannot be justified; or persevere in oppression from which their hearts must recoil? If the barbarous *Africans* shall continue to enslave each other, let the dæmon slavery remain among them, that their crime may include its own punishment. Let not *Christians*, by administering to their wickedness, confess their religion to be a useless refinement, their profession vain, and themselves as inhuman as the savages they detest.’

James Foster, in his *Discourses on Natural Religion and Social Virtue*, also shews his just indignation at this wicked practice, which he declares to be a *criminal and outrageous violation of the natural right of mankind*. At page 156, 2d vol. he says, ‘ Should we have read concerning the *Greeks* or *Romans* of old, that they traded, with view to make slaves of their own species, whom they certainly knew that this would involve in schemes of blood and murder, of destroying or enslaving each other, that they even

' fomented wars, and engaged whole nations  
 ' and tribes in open hostilities, for their own  
 ' private advantage; that they had no detesta-  
 ' tion of the violence and cruelty, but only  
 ' feared the ill success of their inhuman en-  
 ' terprises; that they carried men like them-  
 ' selves, their brethren, and the offspring of  
 ' the same common parent, to be sold like  
 ' beasts of prey, or beasts of burden, and  
 ' put them to the same reproachful trial of  
 ' their soundness, strength and capacity for  
 ' greater bodily service; that quite forgetting  
 ' and renouncing the original dignity of  
 ' human nature, communicated to all, they  
 ' treated them with more severity and ruder  
 ' discipline, than even the ox or the ass, who  
 ' are void of understanding.—Should we not,  
 ' if this had been the case, have naturally  
 ' been led to despise all their pretended refine-  
 ' ments of morality; and to have concluded,  
 ' that as they were not nations destitute of  
 ' politeness, they must have been *entire*  
 ' *Strangers to Virtue and Benevolence?*

' But, notwithstanding this, we ourselves  
 ' (who profess to be *Christians*, and boast of  
 ' the peculiar advantage we enjoy, by means  
 ' of an express revelation of our duty from  
 ' Heaven) are in effect, these very untaught  
 ' and rude *Heathen* countries. With all our  
 ' superior light, we instil into those, whom  
 ' we call savage and barbarous, the most  
     ' despicable

‘ despicable opinion of human nature. We,  
 ‘ to the utmost of our power, weaken and  
 ‘ dissolve the universal tie, that binds and  
 ‘ unites mankind. We practise what we  
 ‘ should exclaim against, as the utmost excess  
 ‘ of cruelty and tyranny, if nations of the  
 ‘ world, differing in colour and form of  
 ‘ government from ourselves, were so posses-  
 ‘ sed of empire, as to be able to reduce us to  
 ‘ a state of unmerited and brutish servitude.  
 ‘ Of consequence, we sacrifice our reason, our  
 ‘ humanity, our *Christianity*, to an unnatural  
 ‘ sordid gain. We teach other nations to  
 ‘ despise and trample under foot, all the obli-  
 ‘ gations of social virtue. We take the most  
 ‘ effectual method to prevent the propagation  
 ‘ of the Gospel, by representing it as a scheme  
 ‘ of power and barbarous oppression, and an  
 ‘ enemy to the natural privileges and rights  
 ‘ of men.

‘ Perhaps all that I have now offered, may  
 ‘ be of very little weight to restrain this enor-  
 ‘ mity, this aggravated iniquity. However,  
 ‘ I shall still have the satisfaction, of having  
 ‘ entered my private protest against a practice,  
 ‘ which, in my opinion, *bids that God, who*  
 ‘ *is the God and Father of the Gentiles un-*  
 ‘ *converted to Christianity, most daring and*  
 ‘ *bold defiance, and spurns at all the principles,*  
 ‘ *both of natural and revealed Religion.*’

How the *Britiſh* nation first came to be concerned in a practice, by which the rights and liberties of mankind are so violently infringed, and which is so opposite to the apprehensions *Englishmen* have always had of what natural justice requires, is indeed surprising. It was about the year 1563, in the reign of Queen *Elizabeth*, that the *English* first engaged in the *Guinea Trade*; when it appears, from an account in *Hill's Naval History*, page 293, That when Captain *Hawkins* returned from his first voyage to *Africa*, that generous spirited Princess, attentive to the interest of her subjects, sent for the Commander, to whom she expressed her concern lest any of the *African* Negroes should be carried off without their free consent, *declaring it would be detestable, and call down the vengeance of Heaven upon the undertakers.* Captain *Hawkins* promised to comply with the Queen's injunction: nevertheless, we find in the account, given in the same History, of *Hawkins's* second voyage, the author using these remarkable words, *Here began the horrid practice of forcing the Africans into slavery.*

*Labat*, a Roman Missionary, in his account of the Isles of *America*, at page 114, of the 4th vol. mentions, that *Lewis* the 13th, Father to the present *French* King's Grand-father, was extremely uneasy at a Law by which all the Negroes of his Colonies were to

to be made slaves; but it being strongly urged to him, as the readiest means for their Conversion to *Christianity*, he acquiesced therewith.

And although we have not many accounts of the impressions which this piratical invasion of the rights of mankind gave to serious minded people, when first engaged in; yet it did not escape the notice of some, who might be esteemed in a peculiar manner as watchmen in their day to the different societies of *Christians* whereunto they belonged. *Richard Baxter*, an eminent preacher amongst the *Nonconformists*, in the last century, well known and particularly esteemed by most of the serious *Presbyterians* and *Independents*, in his *Christian Directory*, mostly wrote about an hundred Years ago, fully shews his detestation of this practice in the following words:

‘ Do you not mark how God hath followed  
 ‘ you with plagues? And may not conscience  
 ‘ tell you, that it is for your inhumanity to  
 ‘ the souls and bodies of men?—To go as  
 ‘ pirates and catch up poor Negroes, or peo-  
 ‘ ple of another land, that never forfeited  
 ‘ Life or Liberty, and to make them Slaves  
 ‘ and sell them, is one of the worst kind of  
 ‘ Thievery in the world; and such persons  
 ‘ are to be taken for the common Enemies  
 ‘ of mankind; and they that buy them, and  
 ‘ use them as beasts, for their meer com-

‘ modity,

‘modity, and betray, or destroy, or neglect their souls, are fitter to be called devils than *Christians*. It is an heinous sin to buy them, unless it be in charity to deliver them.— Undoubtedly they are presently bound to deliver them; because by right the man is his own; therefore no man else can have a just title to him.’

We also find *George Fox*, a man of exemplary piety, who was the principal instrument in gathering the religious society of people called *Quakers*, expressing his concern and fellow-feeling for the bondage of the Negroes: In a discourse taken from his mouth, in *Barbadoes*, in the Year 1671, says, ‘Consider with yourselves, if you were in the same condition as the Blacks are,—who came strangers to you, and were sold to you as slaves. I say, if this should be the condition of you or yours, you would think it hard measure: Yea, and very great bondage and cruelty. And, therefore, consider seriously of this, and do you for and to them, as you would willingly have them, or any other to do unto you, were you in the like slavish condition; and bring them to know the Lord Christ.’ And in his journal, page 431, speaking of the Advice he gave his friends at *Barbadoes*, he says, ‘I desired also, that they would cause their Overseers to deal mildly and gently with their Negroes, and not

' not to use cruelty towards them, as the manner of some had been; and that after certain years of servitude they should make them free.'

In a book printed in *Leverpool*, called *The Liverpool Memorandum-book*, which contains, among other things, an account of the Trade of that port, there is an exact list of the vessels employed in the *Guinea Trade*, and of the number of Slaves imported in each vessel, by which it appears, that in the year 1753, the number imported to *America*, by vessels belonging to that port, amounted to upwards of Thirty Thousand; and from the number of Vessels employed by the *African Company* in *London* and *Bristol*, we may, with some degree of certainty conclude, there is, at least, One Hundred Thousand Negroes purchased and brought on board our ships yearly from the coast of *Africa*, on their account. This is confirmed in *Anderson's History of Trade and Commerce*, printed in 1764, where it is said, at page 68 of the Appendix, ' That *England* supplies her *American Colonies* with Negro-slaves, amounting in number to above One Hundred Thousand every year.' When the vessels are full freighted with slaves, they set out for our plantations in *America*, and may be two or three months on the voyage, during which time, from the filth and stench that is

among them, distempers frequently break out, which carry off a great many, a fifth, a fourth, yea, sometimes a third of them; so that taking all the slaves together that are brought on board our ships yearly, one may reasonably suppose, that at least ten thousand of them die on the voyage. And in a printed account of the State of the Negroes in our plantations, it is supposed that a fourth part, more or less, die at the different Islands, in what is called the seasoning. Hence it may be presumed, that, at a moderate computation of the slaves, who are purchased by our *African* merchants in a year, near thirty thousand die upon the voyage and in the seasoning. Add to this, the prodigious number who are killed in the incursions and intestine wars, by which the Negroes procure the number of slaves wanted to load the vessels. How dreadful then is this Slave-Trade, whereby so many thousands of our fellow-creatures, free by nature, endued with the same rational faculties, and called to be heirs of the same salvation with us, lose their lives, and are truly, and properly speaking, murdered every year! For it is not necessary, in order to convict a man of murder, to make it appear, that he had an intention to commit murder. Whoever does, by unjust force or violence, deprive another of his Liberty; and, while he has him in his power, reduces him, by cruel treatment, to such a condition as evidently endangers his life,

life, and the event occasions his death, is actually guilty of murder. It is no less shocking to read the accounts given by Sir *Hans Sloane*, and others, of the inhuman and unmerciful treatment those Blacks meet with, who survive the seasonings in the Islands, often for transgressions, to which the punishment they receive bears no proportion. ‘ And the ‘ horrid executions, which are frequently ‘ made there upon discovery of the plots laid ‘ by the Blacks, for the recovery of their ‘ liberty; of some they break the bones, ‘ whilst alive, on a wheel; others they burn ‘ or rather roast to death; others they starve ‘ to death, with a loaf hanging before their ‘ mouths.’ Thus they are brought to expire, with frightful agonies, in the most horrid tortures. For negligence only they are unmercifully whipped, till their backs are raw, and then pepper and salt is scattered on the wounds to heighten the pain, and prevent mortification. Is it not a cause of much sorrow and lamentation, that so many poor creatures should be thus racked with excruciating tortures, for crimes which often their tormentors have occasioned? Must not even the common feelings of human nature have suffered some grievous change in those men, to be capable of such horrid cruelty towards their fellow-men? If they deserve death, ought not their judges, in the death decreed them,

them, always to remember that these their hapless fellow-creatures are men, and themselves professing *Christians*? The *Mosaic* law teaches us our duty in these cases, in the merciful provision it made in the punishment of transgressors, *Deuter.* xxv. 2. *And it shall be, if the wicked man be worthy to be beaten, that the judge shall cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, according to his fault, by a certain number; Forty stripes he may give him, and not exceed.* And the reason rendered is out of respect to human nature, *viz.* *Lest if he should exceed, and beat him above these, with many stripes, then thy Brother should seem vile unto thee.* Britains boast themselves to be a generous, humane people, who have a true sense of the importance of Liberty; but is this a true character, whilst that barbarous, savage Slave-Trade, with all its attendant horrors, receives countenance and protection from the Legislature, whereby so many Thousand lives are yearly sacrificed? Do we indeed believe the truths declared in the Gospel? Are we persuaded that the threatenings, as well as the promises therein contained, will have their accomplishment? If indeed we do, must we not tremble to think what a load of guilt lies upon our Nation generally, and individually, so far as we in any degree abet or countenance this aggravated iniquity?

We have a memorable Instance in history, which may be fruitful of Instruction, if timely and properly applied; it is a quotation made by Sir John Temple, in his history of the *Irish* rebellion, being an observation out of *Giraldus Cambrensis*, a noted author, who lived about six hundred years ago, concerning the causes of the prosperity of the *English* undertakings in *Ireland*, when they conquered that Island, he saith, ‘ That a sy-  
 ‘ nod, or council of the Clergy, being then  
 ‘ assembled at *Armagh*, and that point fully  
 ‘ debated, it was unanimously agreed, that  
 ‘ the sins of the people were the occasion of  
 ‘ that heavy judgment then falling upon  
 ‘ their nation; and that especially their  
 ‘ buying of *Englishmen* from merchants and  
 ‘ pirates, and detaining them under a most  
 ‘ miserable hard bondage, had caused the  
 ‘ Lord, by way of just retaliation, to leave  
 ‘ them to be reduced, by the *English*, to the  
 ‘ same state of slavery. Whereupon they  
 ‘ made a publick act in that council, that all  
 ‘ the *English*, held in captivity throughout  
 ‘ the whole land, should be presently re-  
 ‘ stored to their former Liberty.’

I shall now conclude with an extract from an address of a late author to the merchants, and others, who are concerned in carrying on the *Guinea Trade*; which also, in a great measure,

measure, is applicable to others, who, for the love of gain, are in any way concerned in promoting or maintaining the captivity of the Negroes.

‘ As the busines, you are publickly carrying on before the world, has a bad aspect,  
 ‘ and you are sensible most men make objection against it, you ought to justify it to  
 ‘ the world, upon principles of reason,  
 ‘ equity, and humanity; to make it appear,  
 ‘ that it is no unjust invasion of the persons,  
 ‘ or encroachments on the rights of men; or  
 ‘ for ever to lay it aside.—But laying aside  
 ‘ the resentment of men, which is but of  
 ‘ little or no moment, in comparison with  
 ‘ that of the Almighty, think of a future  
 ‘ reckoning: consider how you shall come  
 ‘ off in the great and awful Day of account.  
 ‘ You now heap up riches, and live in pleasure;  
 ‘ but, oh! what will you do in the end  
 ‘ thereof? and that is not far off: what, if  
 ‘ death should seize upon you, and hurry you  
 ‘ out of this world, under all that load of  
 ‘ blood-guiltiness that now lies upon your  
 ‘ souls? The gospel expressly declares, that  
 ‘ thieves and murderers shall not inherit the  
 ‘ kingdom of God. Consider, that at the  
 ‘ same time, and by the same means, you  
 ‘ now treasure up worldly riches, you are  
 ‘ treasuring up to yourselves wrath against  
     ‘ the

‘ the day of wrath, and vengeance that shall  
 ‘ come upon the workers of iniquity, unless  
 ‘ prevented by a timely repentance.

‘ And what greater iniquity, what crime  
 ‘ that is more heinous, that carries in it more  
 ‘ complicated guilt, can you name than that,  
 ‘ in the habitual, deliberate practice of which  
 ‘ you now live? How can you lift up your  
 ‘ guilty eyes to heaven? How can you pray  
 ‘ for mercy to him that made you, or hope  
 ‘ for any favour from him that formed you,  
 ‘ while you go on thus grossly and openly to  
 ‘ dishonour him, in debasing and destroying  
 ‘ the noblest workmanship of his hands in  
 ‘ this lower world? He is the Father of men;  
 ‘ and do you think he will not resent such  
 ‘ treatment of his offspring, whom he hath  
 ‘ so loved, as to give his only begotten Son,  
 ‘ that whosoever believeth in him, might not  
 ‘ perish, but have everlasting life? This love  
 ‘ of God to man, revealed in the gospel, is a  
 ‘ great aggravation of your guilt; for if God  
 ‘ so loved us, we ought also to love one ano-  
 ‘ ther. You remember the fate of the Servant,  
 ‘ who took hold of his fellow-servant, who  
 ‘ was in his debt, by the throat, and cast him  
 ‘ into prison: Think then, and tremble to  
 ‘ think, what will be your fate, who take  
 ‘ your fellow-servants by the throat, that  
 ‘ owe you not a penny, and make them  
 ‘ prisoners for life.

‘ Give

' Give yourselves leave to reflect impartially upon, and consider the nature of, this Man-Trade, which, if you do, your hearts must needs relent, if you have not lost all sense of humanity, all pity and compassion towards those of your own kind, to think what calamities, what havock and destruction among them, you have been the authors of for filthy lucre's sake. God grant you may be sensible of your guilt, and repent in time!'

F I N I S.